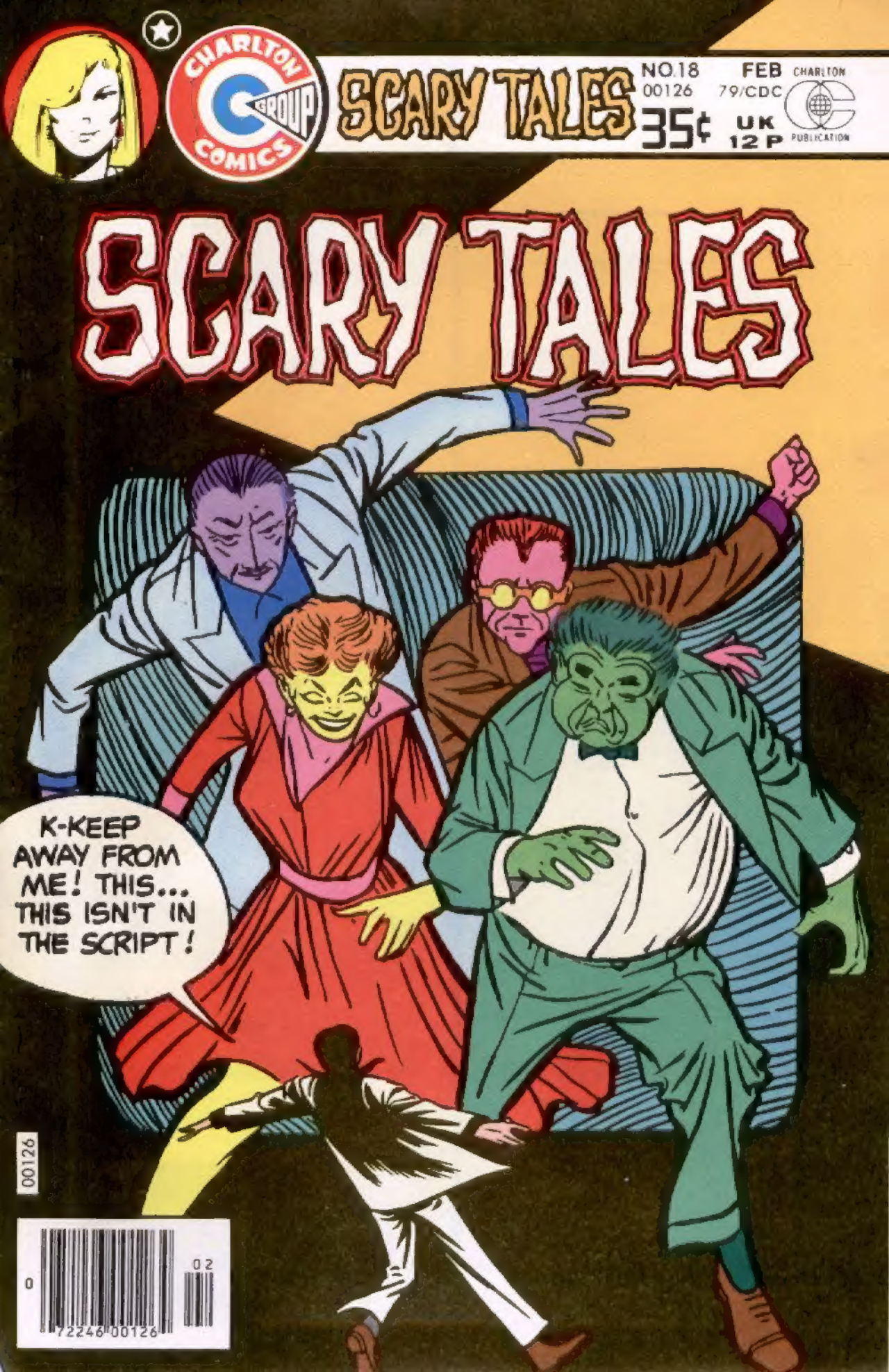
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K-KEEP AWAY FROM ME! THIS... THIS ISN'T IN THE SCRIPT!
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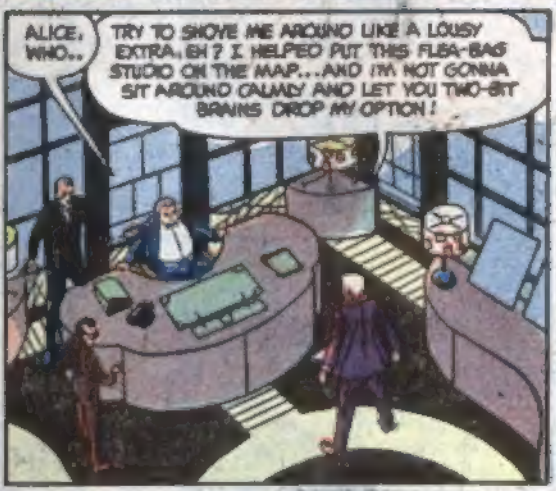
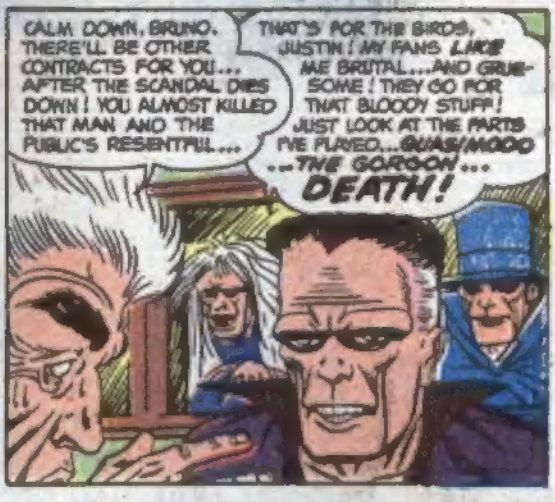
TURTLE		

ON THE BRUTAL GLARE OF THE STARK KLEIG LIGHTS, BRUNO THOR PLAYED HIS HEART OUT IN THE GREATEST ROLE OF HIS CAREER. FOR, TO THE SINISTER MAN-OF-A THOUSAND-GRUESOME-FACES, THE GHASTLY STORY WAS SOMETHING SPECIAL···A MACABRE ADVENTURE IN...

3-D DISASTER DOOM DEATH!

Y-YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE, MR. THOR! THERE'S A CONFERENCE GOING ON..
GET OUTA MY WAY, SISTER! NO ONE KEEPS BRUNO THOR FROM SPEAKING HIS PIECE TO THOSE WILY LITTLE CRUMBS IN THERE!
SIMON JUST STUDIO PERVISO


ALICE, WHO..
TRY TO SHOVE ME AROUND LIKE A LOUSY EXTRA, EH? I HELPED PUT THIS FLEA-BAG STUDIO ON THE MAP...AND I'M NOT GONNA SIT AROUND CALMLY AND LET YOU TWO-BIT BRAINS DROP MY OPTION!


CALM DOWN, BRUNO. THERE'LL BE OTHER CONTRACTS FOR YOU... AFTER THE SCANDAL DIES DOWN! YOU ALMOST KILLED THAT MAN AND THE PUBLIC'S RESENTFUL...
THAT'S FOR THE BIRDS, JUSTIN! MY FANS LIKE ME BRUTAL...AND GRUESOME! THEY GO FOR THAT BLOODY STUFF! JUST LOOK AT THE PARTS I'VE PLAYED...GUASIMODO ...THE GORGON... DEATH!

CARY TALES Vol. 5, No. 18, February, 1979.
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THAT MAN YOU ATTACKED SO VICIOUSLY TALKED PLENTY TO THE NEWSPAPERS, THOR...IT'S KILLED YOU AT THE BOX-OFFICE! AND THAT STRING OF MONSTERS AND GHOULS YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING...THEY RATE ZERO AT THE CASH REGISTER! YOU'RE FINISHED!
YOU'LL CHOKE ON THOSE WORDS, YOU DIRTY TIN-HORN...
N-NO... PLEASE..!
I'LL KILL ALL OF YOU BEFORE... ARGHHH!
CRASH!
I WANT YOU OFF THE LOT WITHIN FIVE MINUTES, THOR...FOR GOOD! AND IF THIS DRUNKEN BUM TRIES TO GET BACK INTO THE STUDIO, SERGEANT, YOU AND THE OTHER SPECIAL POLICE ARE TO SHOOT TO KILL! NOW GET HIM OUT OF HERE!
ON YOUR FEET, BROTHER! START MOVING!
TWO HOURS PASSED, AND BRUNO THOR TRIED TO DROWN HIS ANGER IN A SEA OF WHISKEY...
IT'S WAY PAST CLOSING TIME, MR. THOR...
SHUT UP, JIMMY...? HIC?...AND LISTEN! ALL I NEED TO GET BACK TO THE TOP IS ONE GOOD PICTURE, SEE? I'D SELL MYSELF ...? HIC?...TO THE DEVIL FOR THE KIND OF PART THAT REACHES OUT OF THE SCREEN AND REALLY MAKES PEOPLE SHUDDER! I CAN STILL MURDER AN AUDIENCE!
W-WHO IN SATAN'S NAME...? HIC?... ARE YOU?
I COULDN'T HELP BUT OVERHEAR, MR. THOR...AND I AGREE WITH YOU COMPLETELY. IT JUST HAPPENS THAT I HAVE PRECISELY THE SCRIPT YOU'RE SEARCHING FOR! I'D BE DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOU LOOK IT OVER!

NEVER HEARD OF THE WRITER...NOT ONE OF THE BIG SCRIPTERS I'M ACCUSTOMED TO! BUT THE TITLE... HMMM... INTERESTING...
PLEASE LOOK THE STORY OVER, MR. THOR...IT'S JUST WHAT YOU NEED TO CAP YOUR CAREER. I'LL BE IN TOUCH WITH YOU SOON.
THE DEVIL'S PACT
QUEER! I DIDN'T SEE THAT LITTLE CREEP COME IN HERE! HE ...HE JUST SEEMED TO POP UP OUTA THE FLOOR.
SAY...THIS IS A REAL CHILLER! WHOEVER WROTE IT KNOWS HOW TO ...?HIC!.. BRING OUT THE GOOSE PIMPLES!
YOU'RE A TRIPLE UNDER THE WEATHER, MR. THOR...WANT ME TO HELP YOU HOME?
DON'T..?HIC!.. NEED ANY HELP, JIMMY! I'M GONNA CURL UP WITH THIS BLOOD-CURDLER TONIGHT! BYE!
HIS EYES BUGGING WITH AMAZEMENT, BRUNO THOR READ THE STRANGE SCRIPT FAR INTO THE NIGHT. SLOWLY HIS DOUBTS VANISHED, AS HIS EYES SCANNED THE HORROR-CRAMMED PAGES...
THIS THING'LL BE SOCKO IF THE CENSOR PASSES IT! BRRR...IT MAKES MY BLOOD RUN COLD! ONLY TROUBLE IS...WHERE'D THAT LITTLE GUY COME FROM? WHERE ON EARTH DO I CONTACT... OW! H-HOW-D YOU GET IN?
THE DOOR, MR. THOR...IT WAS AJAR. I TAKE IT YOU LIKE MY SCRIPT?
IT'S STRICTLY 4 STAR STUFF, FRIEND...WITH THIS STORY I'LL SHOW JUSTIN, KANE AND THE REST OF THOSE BOOBS THAT I'M STILL TOP-DOG IN THIS BUSINESS! I'M WILLING TO START WORK TOMORROW!
WHY WAIT TILL THEN, MR. THOR? WE CAN START TONIGHT BY SHOOTING THE CLIMAX SCENE AS A TEST SHOT!

A SHIVER OF DOUBT RAN THROUGH BRUNO THOR'S BODY BUT THE VISION OF HIMSELF RESTORED TO THE TOP OF HIS PROFESSION ACTED LIKE HEADY WINE. AND SO, GUIDED BY THE LITTLE MAN, HE HURRIED THROUGH THE WIND-LASHED NIGHT...

W-WHY...IT'S THE OLD ACME STUDIO! I. .I THOUGHT THEY TORE THIS DUMP DOWN YEARS AGO!

IS *THIS* WHERE WE'RE GONNA SHOOT THE PICTURE, FRIEND? THERE ARE ENOUGH GHOSTS AROUND THIS MAUSOLEUM TO..

GIVES US EXACTLY THE MACABRE MOOD WE'RE AFTER, DON'T YOU THINK? AH...THE OTHERS ARE WAITING.

G-GOOD LORD! IT...IT'S JUSTIN, KANE AND THE OTHERS! WHAT KIND OF GAG...?

THEY'RE ALL MADE OF PLASTIC ...ANOTHER SKILL OF MINE! AND I'VE EQUIPPED THEM TO MOVE AS IF ALIVE..A TRICK WHICH MUST REMAIN MY SECRET! COME...WE'LL DO THE LAST SCENE!

UNCERTAINTY GNAWED AT BRUNO THOR'S BRAIN...THE EERIE SETTING WAS ALMOST TOO MUCH EVEN FOR THE MAN-OF-A-THOUSAND-GRUESOME-FACES. BUT BEFORE HE COULD BACK OUT...

GOT THE PART MEMORIZED, MR. THOR? GOOD! THE SPECIAL THREE-DIMENSIONAL CAMERAS ARE READY TO ROLL!

T-THIS SET-UP IS CRAZY! A TERRIFIC SCRIPT FALLS INTO MY LAP FROM NOWHERE...THE CREEPY GUY WHO DELIVERS IT ALSO MAKES PLASTIC DOUBLES OF MY WORST ENEMIES, DESIGNS THE SETS, FIXES THE LIGHTS AND WORKS THE 3-D CAMERA! ALL *SOLO!* W-WHO THE DEVIL *IS* HE?

ALICE, WHO...? *BRUNO THOR!* WHAT...HOW DID *YOU* GET IN HERE?

THE SET...IT LOOKS LIKE...IT *IS* JUSTIN'S OFFICE! BUT...BUT HOW DID IT GET HERE? AND JUSTIN...H-HE'S NOT FOLLOWING THE SCRIPT...

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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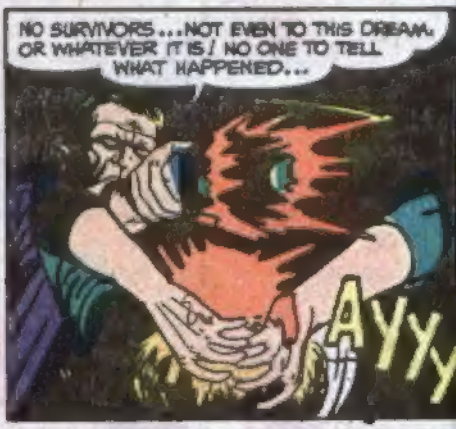
THE PLASTIC DUMMY IS SO LIFELIKE I KEEP THINKING OF IT AS JUSTIN HIMSELF! HE...IT... P-PULLING A GUN! TIME TO JUNK THE SCRIPT AND SAVE MY NECK! THAT...THAT WHISKEY BOTTLE...!

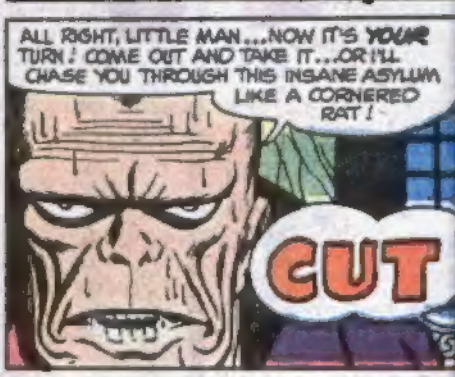
I-IT LOOKS AN AWFUL LOT LIKE THE ONE I TOOK FROM JIMMY'S PLACE! HOW IN HADES DID IT GET HERE? ULP! T-THAT DUMMY ...OUT TO KILL ME, UNLESS I DEFEND MYSELF!
CRASH

N-NO...
AARGHH
THAT...THAT MADMAN! HE'S KILLING MR. JUSTIN WITH THAT AWFUL BOTTLE!

S-STAY AWAY FROM ME, YOU...YOU NIGHTMARES! OR I'LL KILL...KILL!
YIIII

M-MY HEART, ALICE...I'M CHOKING...
MR. CRUMP! HE ...HE'S HAD AN ATTACK! AND THAT INSANE BUTCHER...HE-HE'S COMING FOR ME!
AAAIEE

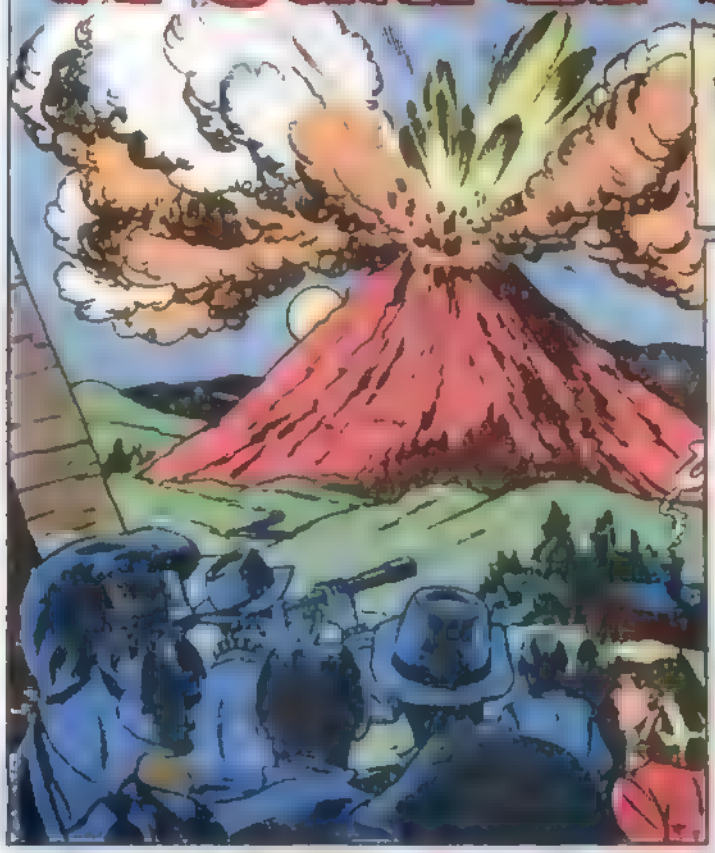

NO SURVIVORS...NOT EVEN TO THIS DREAM, OR WHATEVER IT IS! NO ONE TO TELL WHAT HAPPENED...
AYYY


ALL RIGHT, LITTLE MAN...NOW IT'S YOUR TURN! COME OUT AND TAKE IT...OR I'LL CHASE YOU THROUGH THIS INSANE ASYLUM LIKE A CORNERED RAT!
CUT

SPLENDID IMPROMPTU PERFORMANCE, MR. THOR... I HOPE YOU DIDN'T MIND MY ALTERING THE SCRIPT FOR THE SAKE OF SPONTANEITY! COME... I'LL RUN OFF THE FILM FOR YOU!
B-BUT IT TAKES HOURS TO DEVELOP THE RUSHES! HOW CAN YOU POSSIBLY..?
ANOTHER LITTLE TRICK, MR. THOR... A SECRET OF MINE! NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE PLASTIC DUMMIES.. THEY'VE SERVED THEIR PURPOSE ADMIRABLY. AH... SIT RIGHT DOWN! I'LL RUN THE FILM OFF FOR YOU IMMEDIATELY!
IN A DRUGGED TRANCE, BRUNO SAGGED INTO THE CHAIR. AN EERIE SHAFT OF LIGHT ILLUMINATED THE ROOM AND ONE WALL LEAPED WEIRDLY TO LIFE...
BUT... BUT THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! HE'S DEVELOPED THE FILMS JUST LIKE HE SAID...
IN GAPING FASCINATION, BRUNO THOR WATCHED THE HIDEOUS SCENE REENACTED BEFORE HIS EYES. SUDDENLY HE RECOILED IN VIOLENT DREAD...
THE PLASTIC DUMMIES ...THEY'RE UNBELIEVABLY LIFELIKE! I'D SWEAR THAT IT WAS ACTUALLY JUSTIN WHO... WHAT'S THAT..? T-TRICKLING FROM THE SCREEN... IT LOOKS LIKE... BLOOD!
D-DRIPPING FROM THE SCREEN... BUT NOW? I-IT'S A TRICK... A TRICK ...TO MAKE THE FILM SEEM EVEN MORE THREE DIMENSIONAL! BUT.. BUT THIS IS TOO GRISLY, EVEN FOR ME! STOP THE FILM! STOP IT!
NOT QUITE YET, MR. BRUNO!
T-THE PICTURE OF ME... IT'S MOVING OUT OF THE SCREEN TOWARD ME! T-THIS IS CRAZY... I-I MUST BE LOSING MY MIND..

K-KEEP AWAY FROM ME... WHATEVER YOU ARE! NO 3-D FILM EVER ACTED LIKE THIS! M-MY EYES ARE PLAYING TRICKS ON ME...OR... OR MY BRAIN!
AIEEE
A SCREAM OF AGONY SHATTERED THE SILENCE, THEN THERE WAS SILENCE. A MOMENT LATER, A FIGURE SUDDENLY MATERIALIZED AS IF FROM NOWHERE...
OLD RUINS LIKE THIS STUDIO ARE SO DRY, A SINGLE CARELESS MATCH MIGHT START A CONFLAGRATION. A GENUINE FIRE HAZARD...A REAL MENACE...
THE NEXT MORNING, OUTSIDE THE EXECUTIVE OFFICES AT TITAN STUDIOS...
THAT BLAZE LAST NIGHT SURE WRECKED THE SKELETON OF THE OLD ACME PLANT, DIDN'T IT? HEARD THE FIRE ENGINES CLEAR ACROSS TOWN. I'M SORTA WORRIED...NOT LIKE ALICE JUNO TO LEAVE HER DESK LAMP BURNING ALL NIGHT. C'MON, JANITOR...OPEN MR. JUSTIN'S DOOR!
MUSTA BEEN AN ALL NIGHT CONFERENCE. IF YOU ASK ME, MR. JUSTIN DOESN'T OFTEN... G-GOOD GOD! J-JUSTIN...KANE... CRUMP...ALICE...MURDERED TO DEATH!
B-BUT THE DOOR WAS LOCKED FROM INSIDE...AND ALL THE WINDOWS ARE TIGHT SHUT! WHAT...WHAT DERANGED MADMAN COULD'VE DONE THIS?
FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, SERGEANT, I'D SAY IT WAS SOMEONE WHO HAD A PACT WITH THE DEVIL!

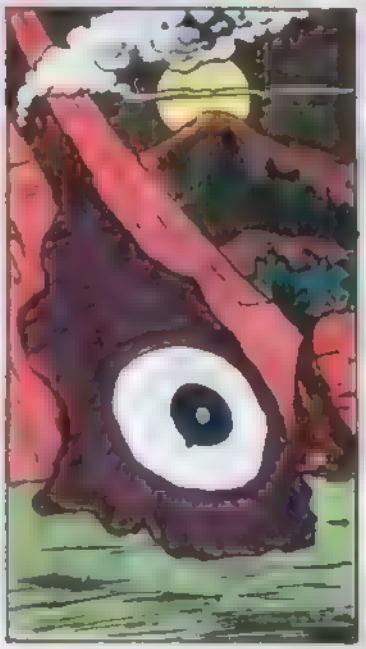
A SIMPLE WISH



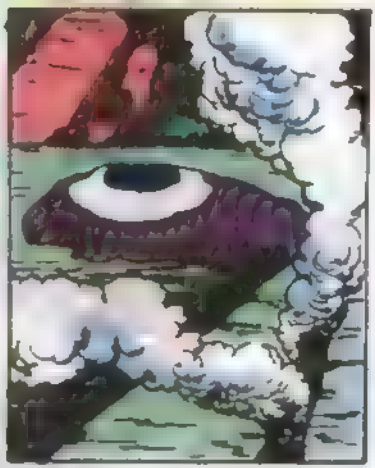
WE DIDN'T ASK MUCH---JUST THE SAME, SIMPLE THING WE ALL WANT! OF COURSE, WE KNOW IT'S EASIER SAID THAN DONE! IT ALL STARTED THAT NIGHT WHEN, FROM THE STRANGE, UNFATHOMABLE WORKINGS OF THE INNER EARTH, A NEW VOLCANO ROSE, SPEWING AND ROARING MOLTEN LAVA IN GIGANTIC BIRTH-PANGS...

IMMEDIATELY, SCIENTIST AND SIGHTSEER RUSHED TO WATCH THE FIERY PHENOMENA THAT LIGHTED THE DARK NIGHT WITH AWESOME GRANDEUR!

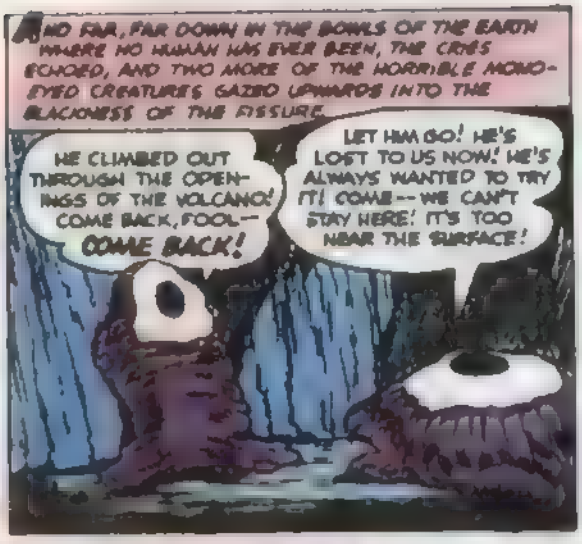
FINALLY, THE WATCHERS LEFT TO SLEEP, BUT THE NEW VOLCANO CONTINUED ITS SATANIC UPHEAVAL, RENDING THE EARTH WITH HUGE AND DEEP FISSURES THAT STEAMED WITH FIRES OF SATAN: IT WAS BUT AN HOUR BEFORE DAWN WHEN, FROM ONE OF THE NEW, DEEP FISSURES, A STRANGE AND SICKENING THING APPEARED...

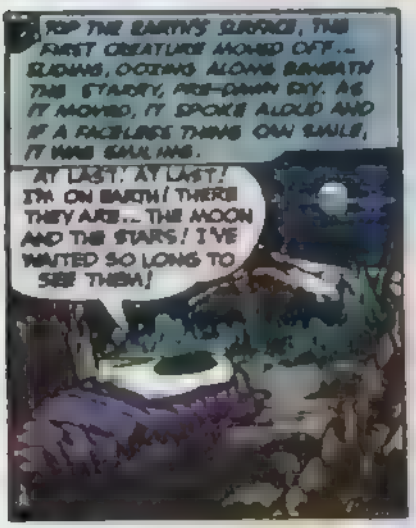


SLOWLY, THE FRIGHTENING THING OOZED FROM THE STEAMING FISSURE TO LAY QUIETLY UPON THE EARTH'S SURFACE FOR A LONG MOMENT! ITS PURPLISH-RED HUE, LIKE THAT OF AN OVER-RIPE PLUM, CARRIED A FOUL, CHARRED ODOR.

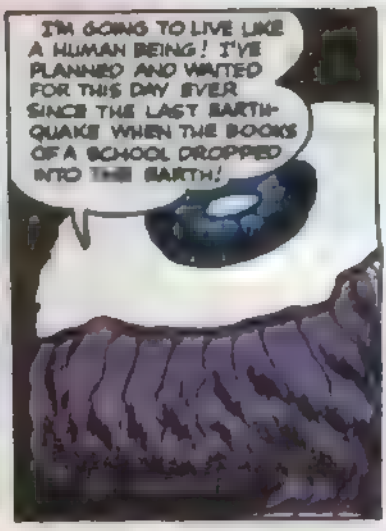


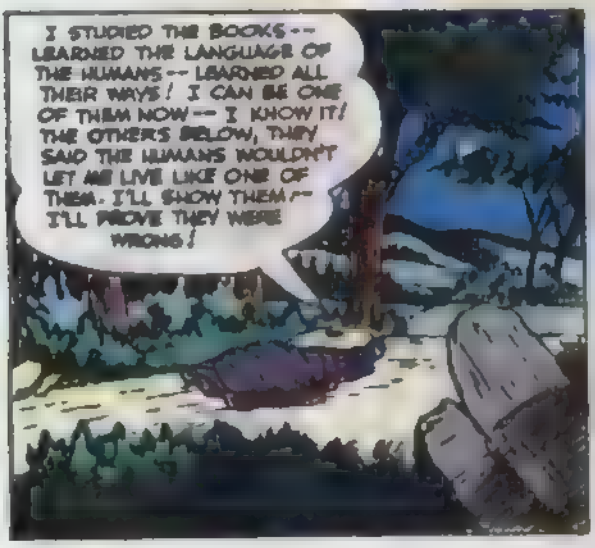
SUDDENLY, THE AWESOME CREATURE STIRRED AT A VOICE FROM FAR DOWN IN THE BOTTOMLESS FISSURE. IT SPOKE, ITS VOICE A HOLLOW, RASPING RATTLE...
THEY CALL ME! BUT I WON'T GO BACK! I'LL SHOW THEM!

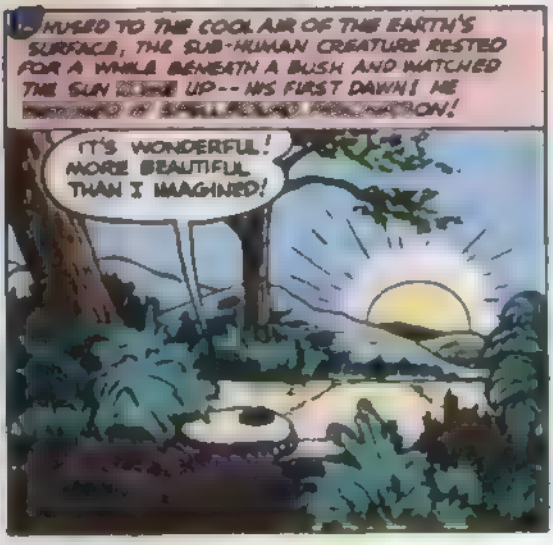

AND FAR, FAR DOWN IN THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH WHERE NO HUMAN HAS EVER BEEN, THE CRIES ECHOED, AND TWO MORE OF THE HORRIBLE MONO-EYED CREATURES GAZED UPWARDS INTO THE BLACKNESS OF THE FISSURE.
HE CLIMBED OUT THROUGH THE OPENINGS OF THE VOLCANO! COME BACK, FOOL-- COME BACK!
LET HIM GO! HE'S LOST TO US NOW! HE'S ALWAYS WANTED TO TRY IT! COME-- WE CAN'T STAY HERE! IT'S TOO NEAR THE SURFACE!


TOP THE EARTH'S SURFACE, THE FIRST CREATURE MOVED OFF... SLOWLY, OOZING ALONG BENEATH THE STARRY, PRE-DAWN SKY. AS IT MOVED, IT SPOKE ALOUD AND IF A FACELESS THING CAN SMILE, IT WAS SMILING.
AT LAST! AT LAST! I'M ON EARTH! THERE THEY ARE... THE MOON AND THE STARS! I'VE WAITED SO LONG TO SEE THEM!

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF EARTH MY PEOPLE HAVE LIVED AT THE VERY CENTER OF THE EARTH'S CORE! SUB-HUMAN, THE HUMANS WOULD CALL US IF THEY KNEW WE EXISTED BUT NOW I'VE MADE IT-- I'M ATOP EARTH!


I'M GOING TO LIVE LIKE A HUMAN BEING! I'VE PLANNED AND WAITED FOR THIS DAY EVER SINCE THE LAST EARTHQUAKE WHEN THE BOOKS OF A SCHOOL DROPPED INTO THE EARTH!


I STUDIED THE BOOKS-- LEARNED THE LANGUAGE OF THE HUMANS-- LEARNED ALL THEIR WAYS! I CAN BE ONE OF THEM NOW-- I KNOW IT! THE OTHERS BELOW, THEY SAID THE HUMANS WOULDN'T LET ME LIVE LIKE ONE OF THEM. I'LL SHOW THEM-- I'LL PROVE THEY WERE WRONG!


USED TO THE COOL AIR OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE, THE SUB-HUMAN CREATURE RESTED FOR A WHILE BENEATH A BUSH AND WATCHED THE SUN [illegible] UP-- HIS FIRST DAWN! HE [illegible] IN SPELLBOUND FASCINATION!
IT'S WONDERFUL! MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN I IMAGINED!

AS THE SUN ROSE HIGHER, THE EARLY WORKERS LEFT THEIR HOMES. A FARMER TRUDGED DOWN THE ROAD, A GAUNT, ELDERLY MAN, AND THE CREATURE FROM INNER EARTH SLID FORWARD TO GREET HIM, UNAWARE OF ITS OWN TERRIBLE, SICKENING APPEARANCE. THE FARMER HALTED, FROZEN IN HORROR!
MEL-LO, FRIEND...!
EH..?
N-NO-- AAAIIII!
DON'T--DON'T SCREAM! I WON'T HURT YOU--- PLEASE!
UH! MY--HEART--- AAAAHHHHH!
THE FARMER FELL LIFELESS, BUT HIS SCREAM BROUGHT TWO POLICEMEN ON EARLY PATROL! THEY RAN FORWARD WITH DRAWN GUNS AND, WITH THE INSTINCTIVE KNOWLEDGE THAT IS A PART OF ALL LIVING THINGS, THE CREATURE FLED TOWARD THE WOODS.
IT'S OLD JENKINS-- DEAD! HE HAD A BAD HEART! SOMETHING FRIGHTENED HIM AND IT GAVE OUT! WHAT WAS IT?
SEARCH ME! I SAW SOMETHING GO INTO THE WOODS, BUT MY EYES MUST HAVE BEEN PLAYING TRICKS ON ME! PROBABLY A DOG! POOR JENKINS!
BARRICKLE, IN THE SILENT WOODS, THE SUB-EARTH CREATURE TROMBLED, HALF IN FRIGHT, HALF IN ANGER.
HE-- HE WOULDN'T EVEN TALK TO ME! HE JUST SCREAMED! MAYBE THE OTHERS WERE RIGHT! MAYBE THE HUMANS WON'T LET ME LIVE LIKE ONE OF THEM JUST BECAUSE I LOOK A LITTLE DIFFERENT!
NO-- I WON'T BELIEVE THAT! THEIR BOOKS SAID THAT THEY HAD FRIENDSHIP FOR OTHERS, THAT THEY JUDGED OTHERS NOT BY LOOKS BUT BY DEEDS. THEY'LL LEARN I MEAN NO HARM!
AFTER A WAIT, THE CREATURE FROM INNER EARTH VENTURED FORTH AGAIN. MANY HOURS HAD PASSED SINCE HIS COMING UPON EARTH'S SURFACE AND HUNGER GNAWED AT HIM. SILENTLY HE OOZED HIS HORRIBLE SELF TOWARD A MODEST HOUSE. THE BACK DOOR WAS OPEN AND A WOMAN WAS IN THE KITCHEN...

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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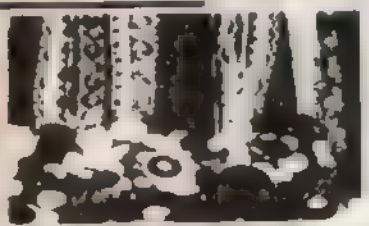

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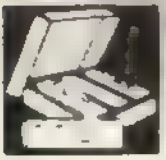

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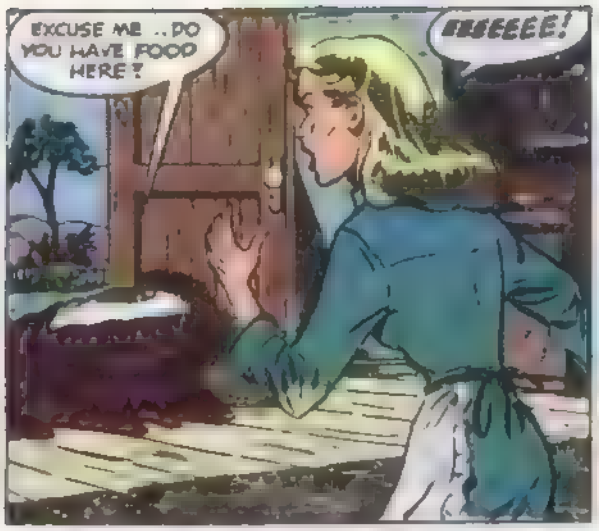
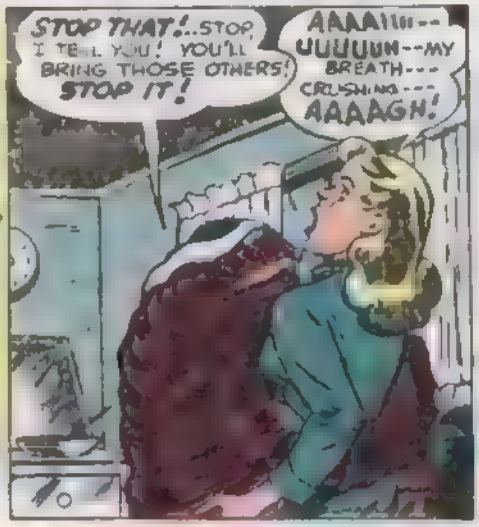
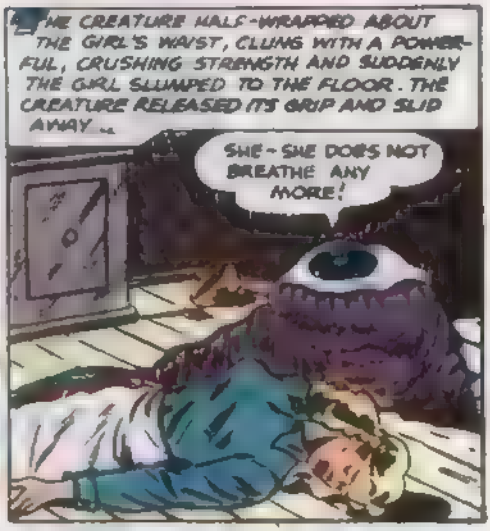


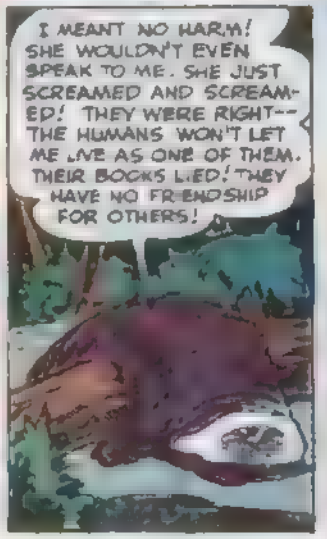
BUT THE TERROR-STRUCK, HYSTERICAL WOMAN CONTINUED HER SCREAMING AND THE CREATURE PROPELLED ITSELF FORWARD TO FASTEN UPON HER. SOMEHOW, HE HAD TO STOP THIS HUMAN'S SCREAMING! HE MEANT NO HARM! IF ONLY SHE'D STOP SCREAMING...!



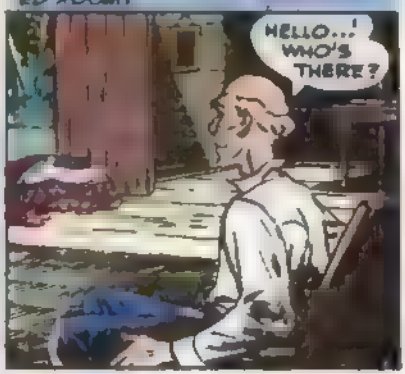
THE CREATURE HALF-WRAPPED ABOUT THE GIRL'S WAIST, CLUNG WITH A POWERFUL, CRUSHING STRENGTH AND SUDDENLY THE GIRL SLUMPED TO THE FLOOR. THE CREATURE RELEASED ITS GRIP AND SLID AWAY...



WHEN HE HEARD THE SOUNDS--- HARSH CRIES AND THE BAYING OF HOUNDS! PROPELLING HIS FLACCID BODY WITH SURPRISING SPEED, HE FLED FROM THE HOUSE JUST AS THE POLICE, BROUGHT BY THE WOMAN'S SCREAMS, DREW NEAR!


I MEANT NO HARM! SHE WOULDN'T EVEN SPEAK TO ME. SHE JUST SCREAMED AND SCREAMED! THEY WERE RIGHT--THE HUMANS WON'T LET ME LIVE AS ONE OF THEM. THEIR BOOKS LIED! THEY HAVE NO FRIENDSHIP FOR OTHERS!

WITH THE POLICE AND BLOODHOUNDS CLOSE BEHIND, TRACKING THE FOUL ODOR WITH EASE, THE CREATURE CAME TO A LONE SHACK IN THE WOODS. HE SLIPPED INTO THE DOORWAY TO SEE AN OLD MAN SITTING ALONE INSIDE A SPARSELY FURNISHED ROOM!



PLEASE -- LET ME STAY IN HERE! I WON'T HURT YOU! DO NOT BE AFRAID!
I AM NOT AFRAID, MY FRIEND! COME IN -- COME IN!
YOU ARE WELCOME TO SHARE MY HUMBLE HOME. IT IS NOT MUCH, BUT STAY BY ALL MEANS IF YOU LIKE!
HE -- HE ACCEPTS ME!
THE CREATURE FROM THE EARTH'S DEPTH KNEW SURPRISE, AND INSTANTLY HIS SIMPLE [illegible] BURST INTO LIFE ANEW AT THE OLD MAN'S WORDS!
I-I CAN BE ACCEPTED, AFTER ALL! I CAN LIVE LIKE A HUMAN! I KNEW I WAS RIGHT! THEY'RE NOT ALL LIKE THOSE OTHERS!
BEFORE YOU SETTLE DOWN, PLEASE BRING ME MY BOOK FROM THE TABLE. MY BONES ARE OLD AND TIRED!
BOOK? TABLE? OH, YES -- YES, CERTAINLY!
REACHING ITS BONELESS BODY UPWARDS TO THE TABLE TOP, THE CREATURE PAUSED TO GLANCE AT THE OLD MAN'S BOOK. INSTANTLY, A STRANGLED CRY BURST FROM THE STRANGE BEING. TRULY A CRY FROM ANOTHER WORLD!
AAAAARRRGH!
WITH ITS STRANGLED CRY STILL HANGING IN THE AIR, THE CREATURE RUSHED INTO THE PATH OF ITS PURSUERS! A VOLLEY OF SHOTS SPLIT THE AIR AND WITHIN SECONDS THE BONELESS FORM LAY DEAD!
IT MOVED RIGHT INTO OUR BULLETS! JUMPING TOADSTOOLS WHAT IS IT?
SEARCH ME! SOME FREAK OF NATURE, I GUESS!
BUT INSIDE THE SHACK, THE OLD MAN'S BOOK BORE THE WORDS THAT HAD KILLED A DREAM. A SIMPLE DREAM TO LIVE LIKE A HUMAN BEING! YET THE STRANGE CREATURE HAD WATCHED THE SUN RISE AND HAD SEEN THE STARS AND THE MOON. IS THERE REALLY MORE?
PEN STORIES

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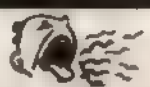

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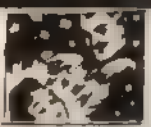

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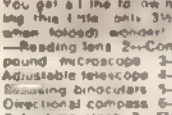

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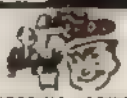

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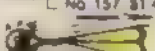

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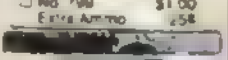

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WHOOPIE CUSHION Simply place it on some one's chair or couch. When your favorite victim sits down—watch the fun and whoopee begin! Strange sound effects before beginning them as scribed with the air much to their embarrassment
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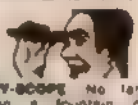

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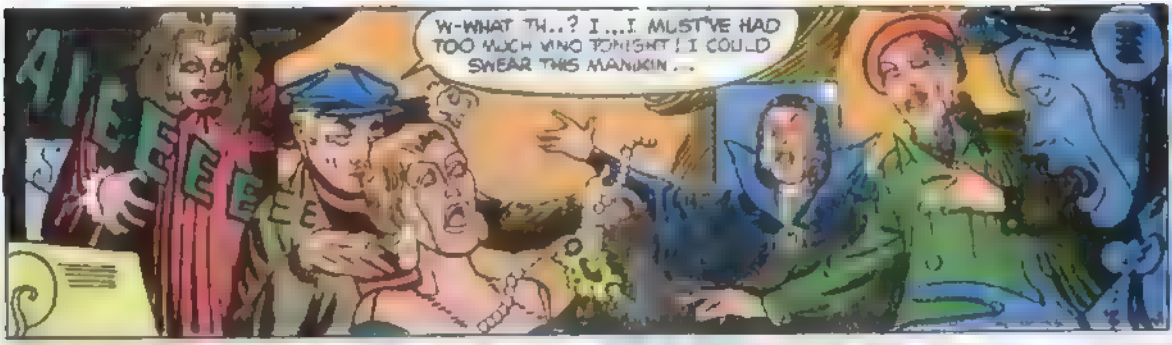
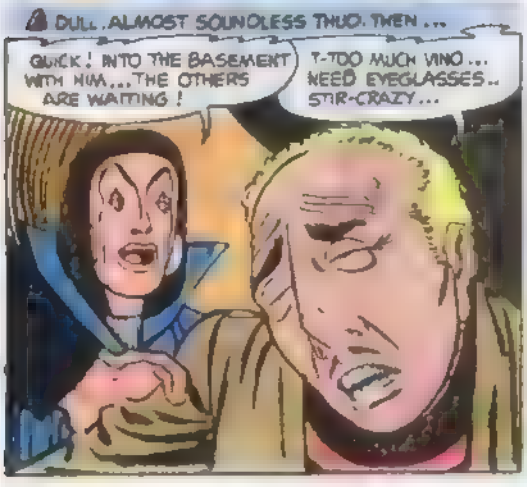
THE SCHEME WAS FOOLPROOF AND DEVILISHLY INGENIOUS... TRULY OUT OF THIS WORLD. BUT BETWEEN GARY CONRAD AND SUCCESS STOOD...
THE NIGHT PEOPLE
T-THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING... I M-MUST BE LOSING MY MIND! A MINUTE AGO I WAS THE ONLY LIVING CREATURE IN THE BUILDING, AND NOW...NOW...!
FOR A CENTURY, DIMPLE'S DEPARTMENT STORE HAD CLOSED PROMPTLY AT SIX O'CLOCK. EXCEPT ONCE...
THE DUMP'S ALMOST EMPTY! A COUPLA MORE MINUTES OF PLAYING CAT AND MOUSE, AND I'M IN THE CLEAR!
GO AHEAD GRANDPA...CHECK THE DOOR'S CAREFULLY! NOTHING LIKE A NEAR-SIGHTED NIGHT WATCHMAN TO HELP A LAD MAKE A GRAND SLAM!
THE PLACE IS ALL MINE, NOW... UNTIL THEY OPEN UP IN THE MORNING AND I WALK OUT A RICH MAN. LET'S SEE...THE JEWELRY DEPARTMENT LOOKS LIKE A JUICY PLUM
THOUGHTFUL OF THE MANAGEMENT TO LEAVE SOME BAUBLES ON THEIR FLOOR MANIKINS! KIND OF FORGETFUL, TOO. THIS NECKLACE...IT LOOKS LIKE REAL ICE! OUGHTA BE WORTH...


AIEEEEE
W-WHAT TH..? I...I MUST'VE HAD TOO MUCH VINO TONIGHT! I COULD SWEAR THIS MANIKIN ...

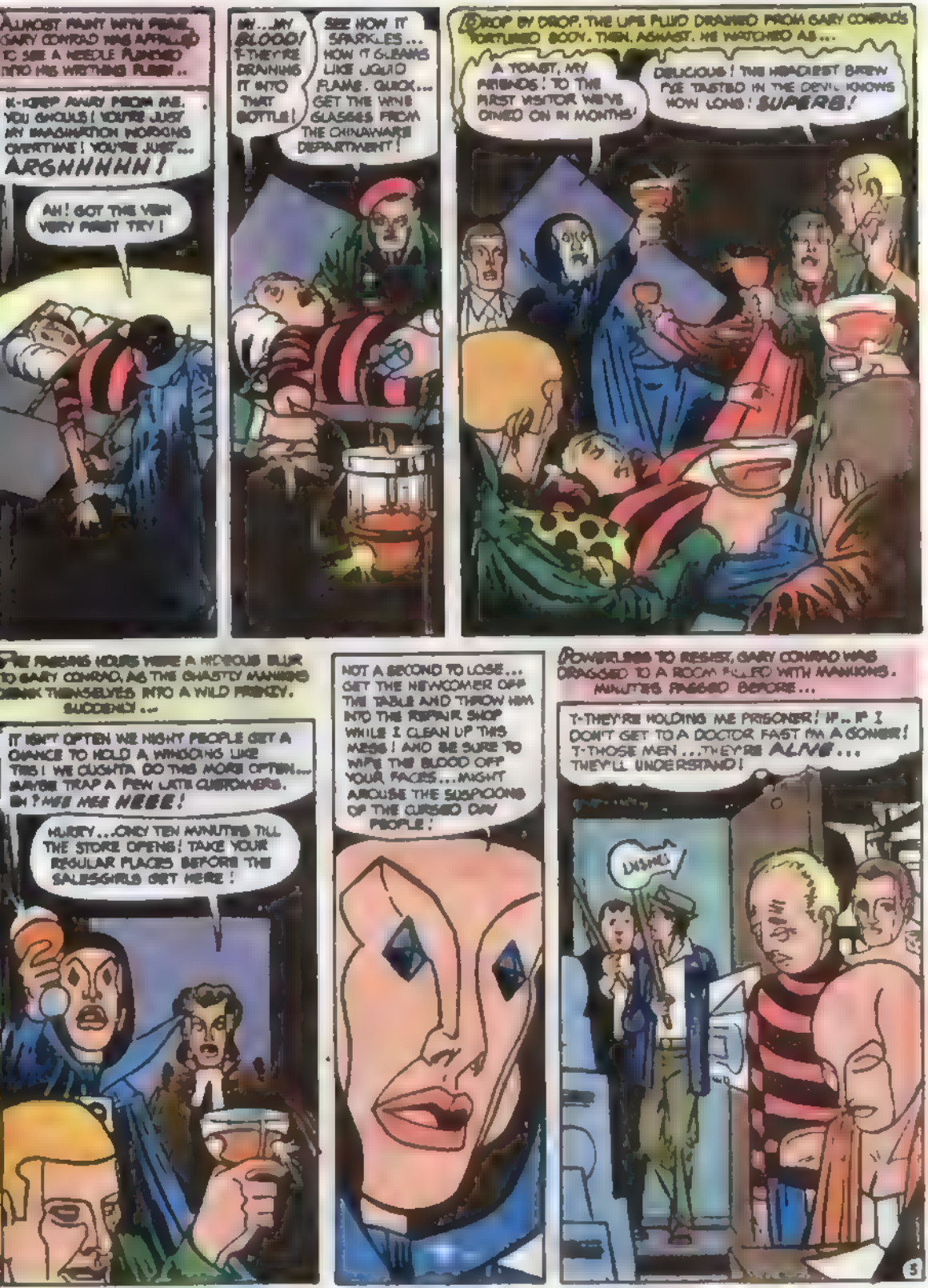
T-THIS IS CRAZY! THE WHOLE DUMP ...IT'S ALIVE! ALL THE DUMMIES ...THEY'RE ZEROING IN ON ME!

G-GOOD GOD! THE BULLETS... THEY'RE PASSING RIGHT THROUGH THESE Z-ZOMBIES!
BRANGG
BRANG
BRANG

LEGGO YOU N-NIGHT-MARES. YOU'RE ALL DEAD. YOU CAN'T BE DOING THIS!
HURRY BEFORE THAT CURSED ROMAN COMES BACK!

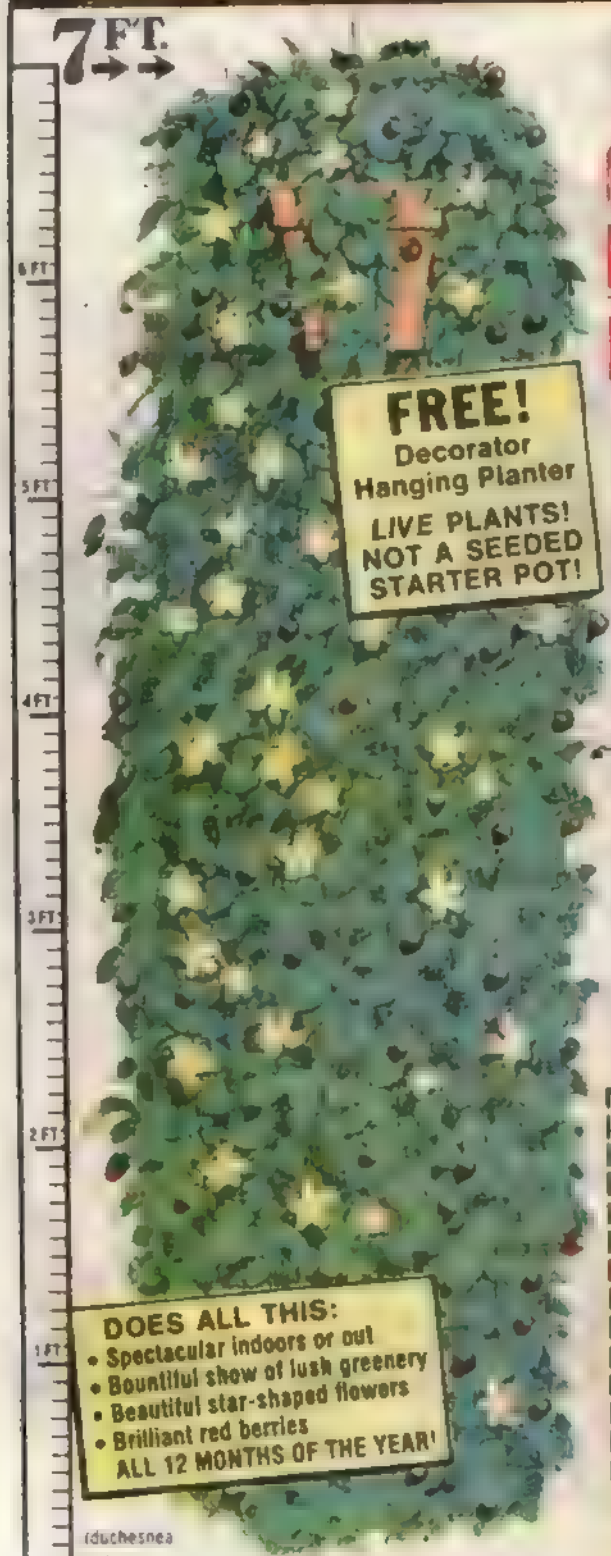

DULL. ALMOST SOUNDLESS THUD. THEN ...
QUICK! INTO THE BASEMENT WITH HIM... THE OTHERS ARE WAITING!
T-TOO MUCH VINO... NEED EYEGLASSES.. STIR-CRAZY...

FIRST NEWCOMER WE'VE HAD IN ALMOST A YEAR! STRAP HIM DOWN GOOD AND TIGHT..
THE SURGICAL TOOLS ...I GOT THEM FROM THE FIRST-AID OFFICE!


ALMOST PAINT WITH FEAR, GARY CONRAD WAS AFFRIGHTED TO SEE A NEEDLE PLUNGED INTO HIS WRITHING FLESH..
K-KEEP AWAY FROM ME, YOU GHOULS! YOU'RE JUST MY IMAGINATION WORKING OVERTIME! YOU'RE JUST... ARGHHHHH!
AH! GOT THE VEIN VERY FIRST TRY!
MY...MY BLOOD! T-THEY'RE DRAINING IT INTO THAT BOTTLE!
SEE HOW IT SPARKLES... HOW IT GLEAMS LIKE LIQUID FLAME. QUICK... GET THE WINE GLASSES FROM THE CHINAWARE DEPARTMENT!
DROP BY DROP, THE LIFE FLUID DRAINED FROM GARY CONRAD'S TORTURED BODY. THEN, ASHAST, HE WATCHED AS...
A TOAST, MY FRIENDS! TO THE FIRST VISITOR WE'VE DINED ON IN MONTHS!
DELICIOUS! THE FINEST BREW I'VE TASTED IN THE DEVIL KNOWS HOW LONG! SUPERB!
THE FINISHING TOUCHES WERE A HIDEOUS BLUR TO GARY CONRAD, AS THE GHASTLY MANIKINS DRANK THEMSELVES INTO A WILD FRENZY. SUDDENLY...
IT ISN'T OFTEN WE NIGHT PEOPLE GET A CHANCE TO HOLD A WINDOWS LIKE THIS! WE OUGHTTA DO THIS MORE OFTEN... MAYBE TRAP A FEW LATE CUSTOMERS. EH? HEE HEE HEEE!
HURRY...ONLY TEN MINUTES TILL THE STORE OPENS! TAKE YOUR REGULAR PLACES BEFORE THE SALESGIRLS GET HERE!
NOT A SECOND TO LOSE... GET THE NEWCOMER OFF THE TABLE AND THROW HIM INTO THE REPAIR SHOP WHILE I CLEAN UP THIS MESS! AND BE SURE TO WIPE THE BLOOD OFF YOUR FACES... MIGHT AROUSE THE SUSPICIONS OF THE CURSED DAY PEOPLE!
POWERLESS TO RESIST, GARY CONRAD WAS DRAGGED TO A ROOM FILLED WITH MANIKINS. MINUTES PASSED BEFORE...
T-THEY'RE HOLDING ME PRISONER! IF... IF I DON'T GET TO A DOCTOR FAST I'M A GONER! T-THOSE MEN... THEY'RE ALIVE... THEY'LL UNDERSTAND!
DISMS!
3

THE ANGUISHED SCREAM FAILED TO ISSUE FROM GARY CONRAD'S STRAINING THROAT. IN DESPERATION...
THEY...THEY CAN'T HEAR ME! I-I'M BEGINNING TO FEEL DIZZY. AS IF I'M FADING AWAY! IT'S NOW...OR... NEVER...
SUMMONING UP HIS LAST OUNCE OF STRENGTH, GARY CONRAD HURLED HIMSELF FORWARD...
M-MUST ATTRACT THEIR...ATTENTION... WARN THEM! THOSE HIDEOUS NIGHT PEOPLE...ALL OVER...THE BUILDING. WAITING...WAITING...
HEH! ONE OF THE WAX MANIKINS...FALLING ON ITS FACE!
FUNNY! I DON'T EVER REMEMBER SEEING THIS DUMMY HERE! LOOK AT THAT UGLY FACE...NOT THE SORT OF THING WE USE FOR DISPLAY AT DIMPLE'S.
BODY ISN'T BAD...MIGHT USE IT IN SPORTING GOODS OR THE SHIRT AND TIE WINDOW! GIVES ME AN IDEA!
DESPAIRING SOB TREMBLED HYSTERICALLY ON GARY CONRAD'S LIPS. BUT THE TWO MEN FAILED TO NOTICE IT---FOR THEY WERE TOO INTENT ON THEIR WORK.
RIGHT AT THE SHOULDER LINE...ONE SWING OUGHT TO DO IT. WE CAN ALWAYS FASTEN ANOTHER HEAD ON THE BODY. HERE GOES...
D-DON'T! FOR...FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE.... PLEASE!
P-PAUL! WHEN YOU SWUNG THAT AXE...I-I'D SWEAR THIS DUMMY SQUIRMED!
SNAP OUT OF IT, PAL... NEXT YOU'LL BE SEEING GHOSTS. I'LL JUST THROW THIS MESS INTO THE OVEN AND LET THE WAX MELT DOWN... THEN WE'LL GO OUT FOR SOME COFFEE. YOU NEED FRESH AIR!
AT THE VERY MOMENT THE TWO MEN TURNED TOWARDS THE DOOR, THE HEADLESS WAX MANIKIN TWITCHED ONCE, THEN LAY STILL AS DEATH.
N-NO.... NO.... NO!
AND AMIDST THE SEARING FLAMES, THERE WAS A SOUND VERY MUCH LIKE A STRANGLED SHRIEK. JUST THE CRACKLE OF THE FIRE... OR IMAGINATION...OR...?
END

HORTICULTURAL EXPERTS AGREE THIS IS...



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Guaranteed To Reach The Floor In Just 7 Weeks!

We've never ever seen such a magnificent flowering house plant that grows so quickly, flowers so profusely, and produces berries in such abundance — not just during one season but ALL 4 SEASONS OF THE YEAR — and yet is so happy with little or no attention. Just think of it — nature there's not one flowering house plant on earth like the Fountain O' Flowers that does all this:

- ✓ ***Flowers and berries all year long***
- ✓ ***Zooms as much as a foot a week***
- ✓ ***Flourishes in sun or shade, indoors or out***
- ✓ ***Easy-to-grow, hardy, requires little care***

Imagine this gorgeous decorator plant in your home — golden yellow flower-stars bursting into bloom with bright cherry-red berries popping out all over. And it doesn't just burst with incredible vigor, it actually zooms an amazing 1 foot per week, as it literally covers itself with spectacular flowers and gorgeous berries virtually all year 'round! Expect one miracle after another from the Fountain O' Flowers — it fascinates and delights all who see it!

We guarantee your Fountain O' Flowers will zoom to the floor in just 7 weeks, or return the plants for a full refund of your purchase price (less postage & handling, of course). Order Today.

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YES! Please rush me the Fountain O' Flowers Plant(s) and FREE hanging planters checked below, so I can enjoy its unique cascading beauty this very season!

☐ (#C02) 1 Fountain O' Flowers Plant and FREE hanging planter for $2.97 plus 50c postage & handling

☐ (#C02) SAVE $1.00—2 Fountain O' Flowers Plants and 2 FREE planters only $4.97 plus 75c postage & handling

☐ (#C03) SAVE $2.44—3 Fountain O' Flowers Plants and 3 FREE planters only $6.97 plus $1 postage & handling

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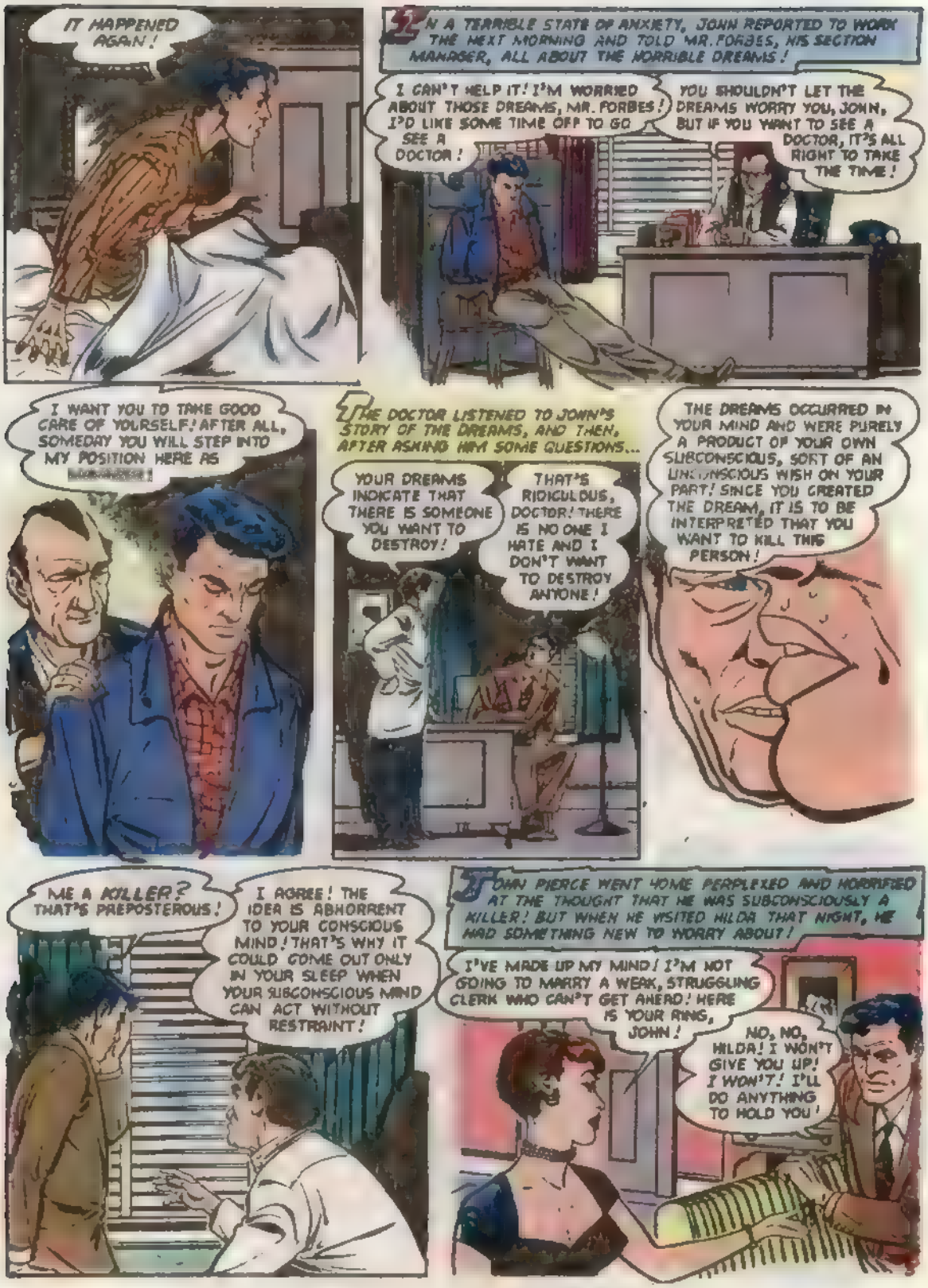
SUDDENLY...
HEY! LOOK OUT!
GOT TO STOP!
BUT IT IS TOO LATE!
SCREEECH
NX-731
the Will to Kill
WHOEVER IT IS MUST HAVE BEEN KILLED OUTRIGHT!

IT WAS ALL A DREAM — THE SAME DREAM I'VE HAD FOR SEVERAL NIGHTS! I'M GLAD IT WAS ONLY A DREAM, BUT I'M WORRIED ABOUT IT!
THE NEXT EVENING, AT THE HOME OF HIS FIANCEE, JOHN PIERCE RELATES THE STORY OF HIS HORRIBLE DREAM!
--- AND I TELL YOU, HILDA, THE DREAM WAS SO REAL THAT IT FRIGHTENS ME!
WELL, YOU'D BETTER STOP WORRYING ABOUT DREAMS AND START WORRYING ABOUT REALITY!
I'VE TOLD YOU BEFORE THAT I'M TIRED OF WAITING UNTIL YOU EARN ENOUGH FOR US TO GET MARRIED! I'M BEGINNING TO THINK WE OUGHT TO BREAK OUR ENGAGEMENT!
NOW, HILDA, DON'T START THAT AGAIN TONIGHT! JUST HAVE A LITTLE PATIENCE! WE'LL BE ABLE TO GET MARRIED ONE OF THESE DAYS!
THAT NIGHT JOHN PIERCE WENT TO BED WITH A TROUBLED MIND!
MAYBE HILDA IS RIGHT! I WANT TO GET MARRIED, TOO, BUT I DON'T SEE HOW WE CAN, JUST YET!
BUT IN SPITE OF HIS TROUBLES, JOHN WAS ASLEEP IN A FEW MINUTES!
WATCH OUT!


IT HAPPENED AGAIN!
IN A TERRIBLE STATE OF ANXIETY, JOHN REPORTED TO WORK THE NEXT MORNING AND TOLD MR. FORBES, HIS SECTION MANAGER, ALL ABOUT THE HORRIBLE DREAMS!
I CAN'T HELP IT! I'M WORRIED ABOUT THOSE DREAMS, MR. FORBES! I'D LIKE SOME TIME OFF TO GO SEE A DOCTOR!
YOU SHOULDN'T LET THE DREAMS WORRY YOU, JOHN, BUT IF YOU WANT TO SEE A DOCTOR, IT'S ALL RIGHT TO TAKE THE TIME!
I WANT YOU TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF! AFTER ALL, SOMEDAY YOU WILL STEP INTO MY POSITION HERE AS [redacted]!
THE DOCTOR LISTENED TO JOHN'S STORY OF THE DREAMS, AND THEN, AFTER ASKING HIM SOME QUESTIONS...
YOUR DREAMS INDICATE THAT THERE IS SOMEONE YOU WANT TO DESTROY!
THAT'S RIDICULOUS, DOCTOR! THERE IS NO ONE I HATE AND I DON'T WANT TO DESTROY ANYONE!
THE DREAMS OCCURRED IN YOUR MIND AND WERE PURELY A PRODUCT OF YOUR OWN SUBCONSCIOUS, SORT OF AN UNCONSCIOUS WISH ON YOUR PART! SINCE YOU CREATED THE DREAM, IT IS TO BE INTERPRETED THAT YOU WANT TO KILL THIS PERSON!
ME A KILLER? THAT'S PREPOSTEROUS!
I AGREE! THE IDEA IS ABHORRENT TO YOUR CONSCIOUS MIND! THAT'S WHY IT COULD COME OUT ONLY IN YOUR SLEEP WHEN YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND CAN ACT WITHOUT RESTRAINT!
JOHN PIERCE WENT HOME PERPLEXED AND HORRIFIED AT THE THOUGHT THAT HE WAS SUBCONSCIOUSLY A KILLER! BUT WHEN HE VISITED HILDA THAT NIGHT, HE HAD SOMETHING NEW TO WORRY ABOUT!
I'VE MADE UP MY MIND! I'M NOT GOING TO MARRY A WEAK, STRUGGLING CLERK WHO CAN'T GET AHEAD! HERE IS YOUR RING, JOHN!
NO, NO, HILDA! I WON'T GIVE YOU UP! I WON'T! I'LL DO ANYTHING TO HOLD YOU!

THERE IS A WAY YOU COULD GET PROMOTED IF YOU MEAN WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT DOING ANYTHING! MR. FORBES IS AN OLD MAN! HE COULD BE PUT OUT OF THE WAY VERY EASILY!
WHAT? KILL MR. FORBES?
IT'S THE ONLY WAY, DARLING! YOU CAN DO IT IF YOU REALLY WANT ME!
MAYBE MR. FORBES IS THE FIGURE IN MY DREAMS AND I'VE WANTED TO KILL HIM ALL ALONG!
JOHN PIERCE COULD NOT EXPLAIN WHAT CAME OVER HIM! IT WAS THE WILD DESIRE TO FULFILL THE RECURRING DREAM . MAYBE IT WAS THE DREADFUL THOUGHT OF LOSING HILDA..BUT HE CAME TO A QUICK DECISION!
ALL RIGHT! WE'LL DO IT!
LATER THAT NIGHT, A CAR SLID SILENTLY UP TO THE DARKENED HOUSE OCCUPIED BY MR. FORBES!
THIS IS THE PLACE! NOW YOU WAIT IN THE CAR FOR ME!
SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY, JOHN PICKED HIS WAY THROUGH THE DARK ROOMS UNTIL HE FOUND MR FORBES' BEDROOM!
THIS IS HIS ROOM! HE'S ASLEEP IN THAT BED!
I'M SORRY, MR. FORBES, BUT I'VE GOT TO DO IT! LIKE HILDA SAYS, THERE IS NO OTHER WAY!
JOHN HELD THE PILLOW DOWN OVER MR FORBES' FACE UNTIL THE CONVULSIVE WRITHING STOPPED AND THE BODY WENT LIMP! MR. FORBES NEVER KNEW WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM!

AS SILENTLY AS HE HAD ENTERED, JOHN RETURNED TO THE WAITING CAR!
HE'S FINISHED! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
I TOLD YOU IT WOULD BE EASY!
BUT AS THEY DROVE AWAY, THE EMOTIONAL STRAIN BEGAN TO TELL ON JOHN AS HE REALIZED THE ENORMITY OF HIS CRIME!
I'M A MURDERER! I KILLED A MAN! DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS? I'M A KILLER! OH, WHY DID I DO IT?
HIS WHOLE BEING REBELLED AGAINST HIS HEINOUS CRIME, AND AT THAT MOMENT...
AAAH!
IT'S HILDA! IT'S HILDA I WANTED TO KILL BECAUSE SHE DROVE ME SO!
NO! NO! NO! I WON'T KILL AGAIN!
EEEEYIN!
CRASH
THUS ENDED THE TRAGIC SHORT-CUT TO SUCCESS OF JOHN PIERCE! THE FIGURE ON THE ROAD? YOU'RE RIGHT! BUT IN JOHN'S MIND, IT WAS REAL!

SOUP'S ON

"Harold, it's dinner time! Come down from your room," called the wrinkled, old woman as she stood at the bottom of the long, serpentine staircase and peered up at the dim, dark, upper level of the ancient, Victorian structure. "I made your favorite soup tonight!" she shouted. "Come down and eat the delicious dinner I made for you!"

The elderly woman's high pitched, squeaky voice echoed through the large, empty house.

Hearing his adopted mother's voice caused Harold to shudder. Instantly, he clicked off his transistor radio. Quickly, he closed the comic book he was reading. Harold hopped off of his bed, cursed in disgust and slowly started toward the door of his room.

"Why doesn't that dirty, old bat die already?" he lamented as he opened the door and stepped out into the long hall decorated with valuable antiques and priceless heirlooms. "The ancient creep is ninety-one years old! I've waited twenty, long years to get her house. I've suffered long enough! I've paid my dues! Why doesn't the horrible, old hag kick off?"

Harold had been waiting for Helen Harper to die for a long, long time. To him, it seemed like he'd been waiting for all eternity.

The aging, lonely, wealthy widow had adopted the delinquent youth when he was thirteen. She'd vowed to reform him and to love him as if he were her own son.

From the first moment Harold met Helen Harper, he'd hated her! He despised her! He loathed her! He abhorred her, but he was too smart in his own, sinister way to ruin what might turn out to be a good thing! She had plenty of money and no relatives or relations. All he had to do was to wait. When she was six feet under all that she owned, all that she possessed would be his!

To make sure he was the principal party named in her will, Harold pampered the old lady. He swallowed his pride and patiently waited for her heart to stop. The silly, old fool actually believed Harold loved her, needed her and couldn't live without her guidance and help.

"There you are at last," Helen cried in delight when she saw Harold appear at the top of the stairs. "Come along now. I made your favorite soup for dinner. It's getting cold. I have some very important matters to discuss with you. I went to see a doctor today. I have some bad, sad news," she stated as she turned away from the stairs and marched toward the dining room.

Inwardly, Harold smiled from ear to ear. Helen had been to the doctor and she had bad news to reveal. That was good news to Harold! Maybe now, at long last, she was going to tell him what he wanted to hear! Was she going to die at last? Harold certainly hoped so!

"I can go out with girls. I can smoke and drink and squander money in hundreds of sinful ways now that she's going to die," thought Harold as he skipped down the stairs. "Most of all, I won't have to eat that sickening, homemade soup that she always cooks. It stinks! I hate it, but I pretend to love it in order not to offend her. Soon, it's going to be prime rib and champagne every night for me!"

Harold stepped into the dining room and seated himself. Instantly, Helen served him her hardy, homemade soup.

"Start eating. While you have your soup, I'll tell you the bad news!" said Helen sadly as she stood near her adopted son.

Harold obeyed her command. Spoonful after spoonful of soup he shoveled into his mouth and gulped down. The soup was terrible! It tasted like bitter almonds, but he smiled as if it were delicious.

"Doctor Collins says my heart is very weak," began Helen. "If I'm lucky, I'll last until the end of the week. I don't think I'm going to be that lucky," she admitted. "I don't mind dying, but I'm worried about you, Harold. Who'll look after you when I'm gone? You need me! You can't do without me! You can't live without me!" "What do you mean?" inquired Harold as he swallowed the last of the soup.

"Since you can't live without me and I'm going to die any day now, I've decided to take you with me!" she whispered stoically. "I poisoned your soup!"

Harold leaped out of his chair. He coughed, gagged and choked. He wrapped his hands around his burning throat. His face turned a pale blue color. Harold twitched spasmodically and then he toppled over onto the floor. There he lay — stone cold still and totally lifeless.

Helen shrieked in pain, grabbed her chest and quickly joined her loving, adopted son in eternity.

Thanks to me you can fulfill your hopes.

I will reveal to you the strengths in your secret personality and thanks to my help you will be overjoyed to receive at last and immediately all the things you have longed for so long in vain!
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I am not asking you for money. Your free personal horoscope will be mailed to you confidentially in a few days. So that you may live your life to the full and seize all the opportunities within your reach, send me the free voucher you see below, immediately — without waiting! Just fill it out and mail!
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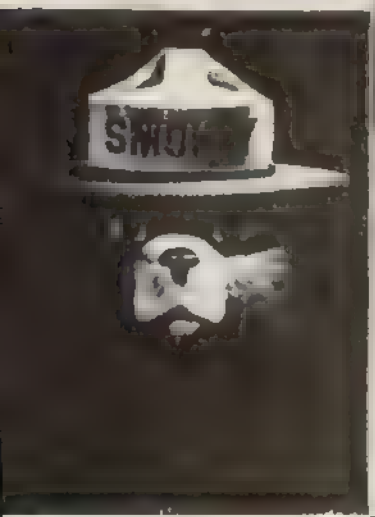

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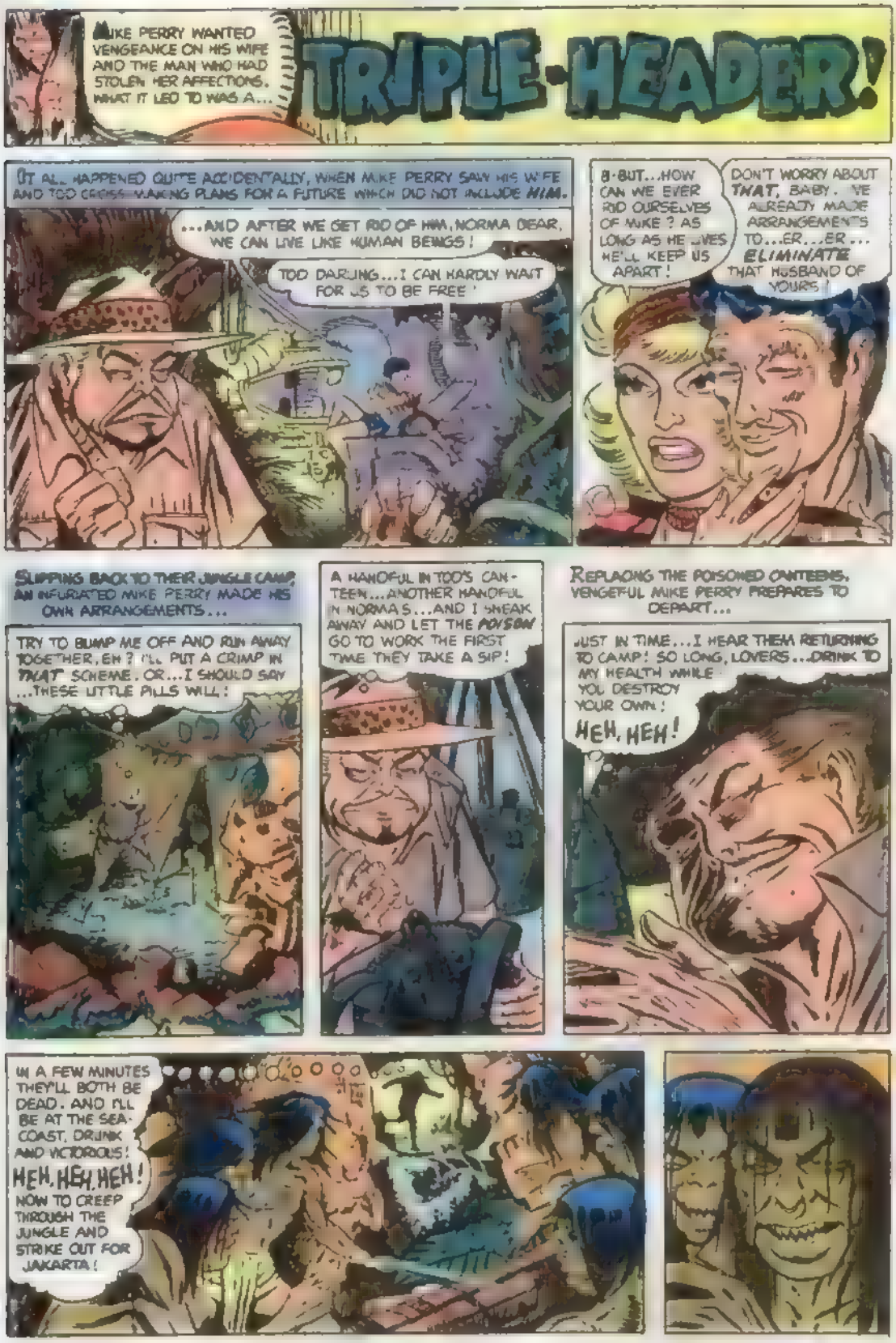
MIKE PERRY WANTED VENGEANCE ON HIS WIFE AND THE MAN WHO HAD STOLEN HER AFFECTIONS. WHAT IT LED TO WAS A...
TRIPLE-HEADER!
IT ALL HAPPENED QUITE ACCIDENTALLY, WHEN MIKE PERRY SAW HIS WIFE AND TOD CROSS MAKING PLANS FOR A FUTURE WHICH DID NOT INCLUDE HIM.
...AND AFTER WE GET RID OF HIM, NORMA DEAR, WE CAN LIVE LIKE HUMAN BEINGS!
TOD DARLING...I CAN HARDLY WAIT FOR US TO BE FREE!
B-BUT...HOW CAN WE EVER RID OURSELVES OF MIKE? AS LONG AS HE LIVES HE'LL KEEP US APART!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, BABY. WE ALREADY MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO...ER...ER... ELIMINATE THAT HUSBAND OF YOURS!
SLIPPING BACK TO THEIR JUNGLE CAMP, AN INFURIATED MIKE PERRY MADE HIS OWN ARRANGEMENTS...
TRY TO BUMP ME OFF AND RUN AWAY TOGETHER, EH? I'LL PUT A CRIMP IN THAT SCHEME. OR...I SHOULD SAY ...THESE LITTLE PILLS WILL!
A HANDFUL IN TOD'S CANTEEN...ANOTHER HANDFUL IN NORMA'S...AND I SNEAK AWAY AND LET THE POISON GO TO WORK THE FIRST TIME THEY TAKE A SIP!
REPLACING THE POISONED CANTEENS, VENGEFUL MIKE PERRY PREPARES TO DEPART...
JUST IN TIME...I HEAR THEM RETURNING TO CAMP! SO LONG, LOVERS...DRINK TO MY HEALTH WHILE YOU DESTROY YOUR OWN!
HEH, HEH!
IN A FEW MINUTES THEY'LL BOTH BE DEAD. AND I'LL BE AT THE SEACOAST, DRUNK AND VICTORIOUS!
HEH, HEH, HEH!
NOW TO CREEP THROUGH THE JUNGLE AND STRIKE OUT FOR JAKARTA!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, BACK AT THE DOOMED JUNGLE CAMP...

THAT'S IT, DARLING...DRINK HEARTY. WE'VE GOT A LONG TRIP AHEAD OF US...AND WE'LL BE TRAVELING FAST AND SILENTLY TO ESCAPE FROM MIKE!

T-THAT WATER, TOO...IT TASTES ...TASTES *F-FUNNY!* MY THROAT... *BURNING*... EVERY-THING'S SPINNING MADLY...

I-I FEEL AS IF...I'M B-BURNING UP... AIEEE!

S-SOMEBODY... PUT IN OUR CANTEENS... DOSE OF *P-POISON!*

TWO DAYS LATER IN A PRIMITIVE JUNGLE VILLAGE, A WEIRD PROCESSION ENTERS A HUT...

PUT IN HERE THE BODIES YOU FOUND IN THE WHITE MAN'S CAMP! AND AS I PROMISED, I WILL PAY YOU WELL!

FOR THE BODIES OF THE WHITE MASTERS...I PAY IN THE WHITE MASTERS OWN COINS! AFTER I HAVE FINISHED WITH THESE TWO THEY WILL MAKE A FINE MATCH FOR THE ONE I OPERATED ON JUST YESTER-DAY!

...THE MAN WE WERE PAID TO KILL, ON THE ROAD TO THE SEACOAST TOWN CALLED JAKARTA! YES, A FINE SET! VERY PRETTY, ARE THEY NOT?

LET'S FACE IT FRIENDS! IN THESE TIMES OF *SHRUNKEN* VALUES YOU COULDN'T WANT MORE OF A BARGAIN! IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, TAKE A CANOE DOWN THE AMAZON AND *HEAD* INLAND FROM JAKARTA...

THE HOTTEST THING IN "T's"!

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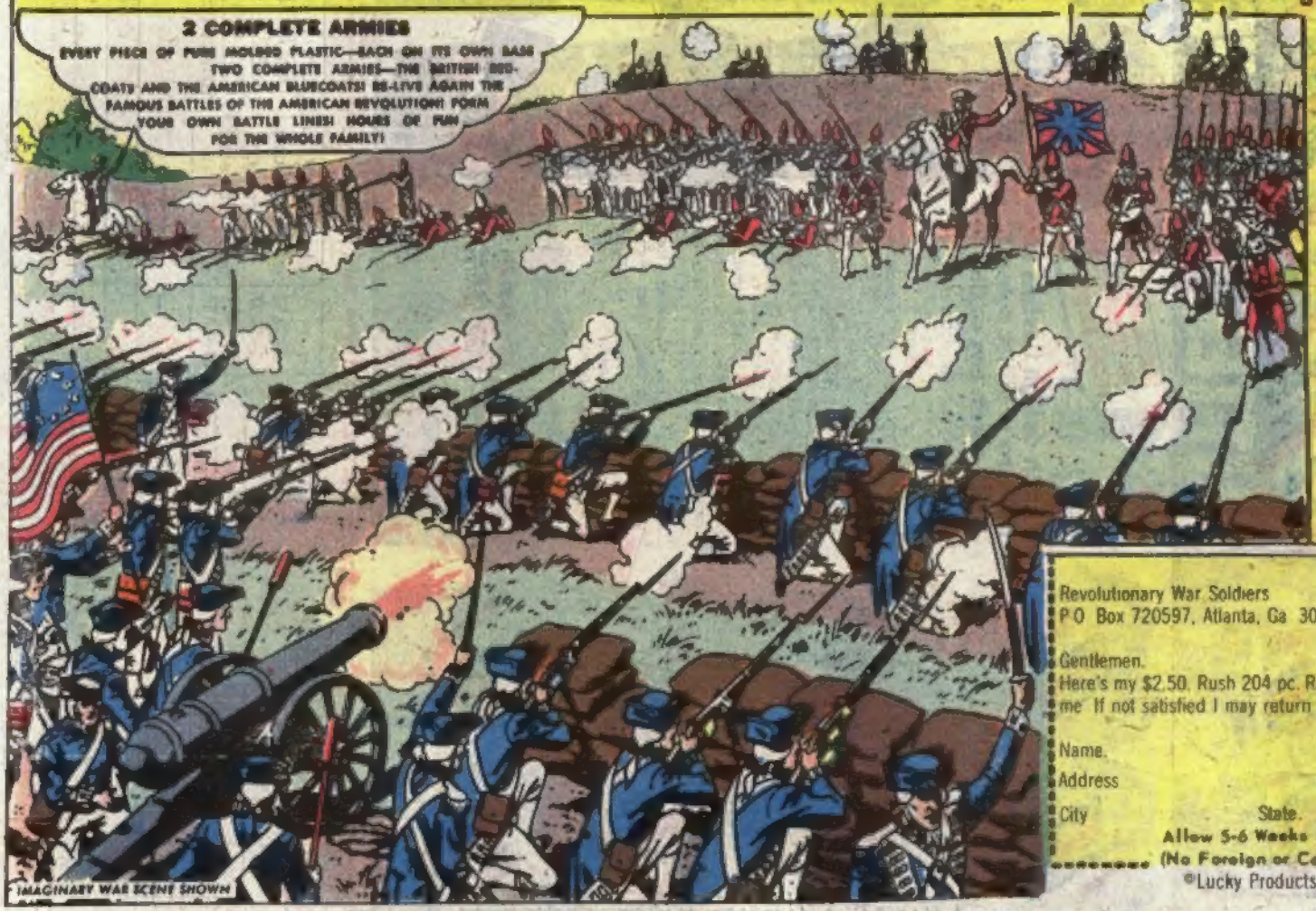
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